

If your business deals with the importation, manufacture, distribution or sale of alcohol in Washington State, you need a liquor license.



A liquor license is an endorsement on your [Business License](#) issued by the [Washington State Department of Revenue \(DOR\) Business Licensing Service](#). You must complete the Business License Application even if you already have a Business License, along with a Liquor Control Board Addendum.

After you submit your liquor license application, the Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB) will take you through the licensing process and ultimately decide whether to approve or deny your application.

Note to Potential Spirits Retailer Applicants
Initiative 1183 provides an exception to a retail spirits license from the 10,000 square feet of retail space requirement if there is no other current spirits retail license holder in the "trade area." Trade area is not defined in the initiative. The initiative gives the Liquor Control Board rulemaking authority to define a "trade area." The Board has determined that it will defer rulemaking to define "trade area" until after June 1, 2012. This will give the Board an opportunity to know how many spirits retail licenses there are statewide as it creates rules.

**Application process for retail licenses and in-state non-retail licenses:**

Use the descriptions in the links below to figure out what type of liquor license you need:

- [Retail liquor license descriptions and fees](#)
- [Non-retail liquor license descriptions and fees](#)
- [How to apply for an out-of-state non-retail liquor license](#)
- [Application for Class 15 Permit for Alcohol Tasting by Persons at least 18 Years of Age](#)

**Complete application**

Visit [bls.dor.wa.gov](https://bls.dor.wa.gov) and go to the [liquor licenses section](#) to fill out the following forms:

- A [Business License Application](#)
- A Liquor Control Board Addendum
  - A [Liquor Control Board Addendum-Retail](#) if you are applying for a retail license (grocery store, motel, restaurant, snack bar, sports/entertainment facility, tavern, etc.)
  - A [Liquor Control Board Addendum-Non-retail](#) if you are applying for a non-retail license (microbrewery, domestic brewery or winery, beer or wine distributor, beer or wine importer, wine grower, etc.)
- An Alcohol Dealer Registration
  - Please mail this form to the U.S. Department of the Treasury Alcohol and Tobacco Tax

- 
- and Trade Bureau (TTB) at the address on the form.
  - Note: If you are applying for a Spirits Retailer liquor license and *intend to sell to on-premises liquor retailers for resale at their licensed premises*, or for a Wine Retailer/Reseller Endorsement, you will **also** need a federal Basic Permit under the Federal Alcohol Administration Act. It must provide for purchasing product for resale at wholesale, and a permit is required for *each* location where you plan to sell to another retailer. Apply for this permit online with the TTB at <https://www.ttbonline.gov/permitsonline/>. It is recommended that you post this permit on your premises with your other licenses.
  - You may need additional local, state and federal licenses for your business that are not covered under the Business License Application. For more information on licensing requirements for your business, contact the [Department of Revenue, Business Licensing Service](#) at 1-800-451-7985 or [BLS@dor.wa.gov](mailto:BLS@dor.wa.gov).
  - A [License Fee Sheet](#) may also be helpful during your application process.

### Submit your paperwork and fees

Please make your check or money order payable to: Department of Revenue. \$75 of the liquor licensing fee is non-refundable in most cases. You have three options for submitting your paperwork and fees:

- **Online:** If you are applying for [certain liquor licenses](#), you can [apply and pay online](#).
- **In person:** Drop off your fees and paperwork at a [DOR business licensing office](#).
- **Mail:**

State of Washington  
Business Licensing Service  
P.O. Box 9034  
Olympia, WA 98507-9034

### Conduct initial interview and submit additional documents

Once the WSLCB receives your application from DOR's Business Licensing Service, a liquor license investigator will contact you to verify the application information and answer any questions you have about the application process. You will also get a list of documents the WSLCB needs to process your application, such as:

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Financial/Source of funds statement | <i>Non-Retail Applicants Only</i>                        |
| • Lease information                   | <a href="#">Non-Retail Tied House Statement</a>          |
| • Affidavits                          | <a href="#">Addendum - Beer and Wine Tax Payment and</a> |
| <a href="#">Reports</a>               |  |
| • Purchase agreements                 | <a href="#">Compliance Agent Authorization Form</a>      |
| • Partnership agreements              |  |
| • Franchise agreements                |  |
| • Floor plans                         |  |
| • Personal/criminal history statement |  |

### WSLCB notifies local authority

State law requires the WSLCB to notify the local authority (i.e. mayor or county commission) of the city or county your business is located in that you have applied for a liquor license. The local authority has 20 days to respond with an approval or objection to your license application. In [Alcohol Impact Areas](#), the local authority has 60 days to respond.

### Temporary License

A temporary license, which allows you to sell liquor prior to approval of a permanent license, is available approximately 30 days after the WSLCB receives your application. Ask your liquor license investigator for more information.

**Non-retail only:** Temporary licenses are only available for distributors.

### Posting notice if required

A public notice will be posted for 14 days at your business if:

- Your business is in a new building or if the location hasn't hosted a liquor licensed business immediately prior to your tenancy
- You are changing the type of liquor license at the location
- You are applying for a winery, brewery or craft distillery license

### WSLCB notifies nearby churches and schools

The officer also will inspect the neighborhood for nearby public and private schools and churches. If

there are any within 500 feet of your business, they will be notified and have the chance to support or object to your application.

Note: State law provides that public schools within 500 feet of the premises may veto a license. The WSLCB will take all protest and support letters into consideration when making a decision to approve or deny a license.

**Public comment period**

The public can send in written comments about the application. Comments should include the trade name, license number and address of the business. You may comment in two ways:

- 1. Send an email to [Comments@liq.wa.gov](mailto:Comments@liq.wa.gov); or
- 2. Mail comments to:

Washington State Liquor Control Board  
Licensing and Regulation  
P.O. Box 43098  
Olympia, WA 98504-3098

**Complete online briefing and request final inspection**

- Retail applicants will need to complete an [online briefing of liquor laws and regulations](#), while non-retail applicants will need to schedule a briefing from their [local WSLCB enforcement office](#).
- Both retail and non-retail applicants will need to request a final inspection from their local WSLCB enforcement office.

**WSLCB approves or denies application**

Using the information gathered during the application process, the WSLCB will either approve or deny your liquor license application.

If the WSLCB approves your application, you will receive an approval letter that serves as your 30-day liquor license until you receive your Business License with the liquor endorsement from the DOR Business Licensing Service.

**If your application is denied, you can either:**

Accept the decision and reapply in a year, or request an administrative hearing

**Reasons for denial may include:**

- Failure to meet basic licensing requirements
- Objection from the local authority
- Objection from a church, school, or other public institution within 500 feet of the premises
- Questionable source of funds
- Indicators of hidden ownership
- Criminal history, i.e. conviction of a felony, conviction of a gross or simple misdemeanor involving liquor or drugs, any series of violations that show a disregard for the law.WAC 314-07-040

When the board processes a criminal history check on an applicant, it uses a point system to determine if the person qualifies for a license. The board will not normally issue a liquor license to an applicant who has accumulated **eight** or more points as indicated below:

Description	Time period during which points will be assigned	Points assigned
Felony conviction	Ten years	12 points
Gross misdemeanor conviction	Three years	5 points
Misdemeanor conviction	Three years	4 points
Currently under federal or state supervision for a felony conviction	n/a	8 points
Nondisclosure of any of the above	n/a	4 points each

If a case is pending for an alleged offense that would earn eight or more points, the board will hold the application for the disposition of the case. If the disposition is not settled within ninety days, the board will administratively close the application.

---